

CALI

Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative 2011



Connecticut
State
Department
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The Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) began in 2004 in collaboration with an international expert of school and district improvement, Dr. Douglas Reeves. It was a bottom up initiative, started first in two school districts (Bristol and New Haven), and then adopted by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) when the two districts began to demonstrate improved student achievement. CALI focuses on the use of data-driven decision-making and standards-based instruction to address the learning needs of each student in order to accelerate the closing of Connecticut's achievement gap and to ensure that ALL students achieve at high standards. In 2007, the initiative was significantly strengthened by accountability legislation, which supported the Department's efforts to identify and work with schools and districts that were identified by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) as underperforming.

Today, CALI includes four professional development modules: *Differentiated Instruction*, *Getting Ready for the Next Generation of Assessments*, *School and Instructional Data Teams* and *Improving School Climate to Support Student Achievement: Creating Climates of Respect*. The CALI initiative continues to be flexible and modules are redesigned or refined based on participant feedback, the changing needs of the districts and other state or national initiatives. The current modules, in particular, have been aligned with two new critical national and state initiatives described below.

The first initiative involves Connecticut's adoption of new national standards. On July 7, 2010, with a unanimous vote, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics. These standards, which are now referred to in Connecticut as CT (CCSS), establish new expectations of what Connecticut school students should know and be able to do as they progress kindergarten through grade 12. While a large percentage of the present Connecticut standards align well with the new standards, there are some significant changes that will require curriculum revisions in the districts. Information and tools regarding the new standards can be accessed on the CSDE Web site at: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=322592>.

The second major initiative involves Connecticut's use of a national assessment system. In June 2010, Connecticut joined the national SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which is developing a comprehensive and innovative assessment system aligned to the CCSS. In order to influence the development of the new assessments, Connecticut has become a governing state in SBAC and is taking an active role in the consortium by participating on several key workgroups.

The new assessments will be operational in the 2014-15 school year and will replace the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMTs) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). The core components will not only include end of the year summative assessments (as do the current CMTs), but will also include optional interim assessments and formative tools and processes for teachers and instructional data teams to use. Information regarding the national

assessment system and Connecticut's participation in their development can be accessed on the CSDE Web site at <http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/SBAC/Smarter%20Balanced.htm>.

As previously stated, then, the CALI modules have been re-evaluated and where appropriate, redesigned to:

1. Align CALI with Connecticut's adoption of the CCSS and the national SBAC to deliver a consistent message across all programs and training delivered and supported by the department.
2. Respond to district's requests to better understand the connections between assessment, data analysis and differentiated instruction to improve student achievement.
3. Integrate major Connecticut educational initiatives into a more cohesive whole for the local districts.

Although much of the information in the CALI modules will be familiar to those professionals who have been active participants in CALI, three of the four modules have been redesigned to achieve the purposes described above. A brief description of the modules is as follows:

1. *Differentiated Instruction (two days)*: Participants will focus on the importance of crafting an environment that actively supports each student's learning, having absolute clarity about the learning goal, knowing where the students are in relation to that goal and adjusting instruction to accommodate for student learning differences. Critical connections will be made between differentiated instruction, Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) and the CT Standards (CCSS).
2. *Getting Ready for the Next Generation of Assessments (one day)*: District teams will be able to formulate an action plan to improve the capacity of the district, school and classroom to engage in assessment practices that support and promote high quality learning. District teams will be able to recognize and understand the components of a balanced assessment system: interim assessments, formative assessment tools and practices, and summative assessments in alignment with the SBAC.
3. *School and Instructional Data Teams (two days)*: In this two day training, participants will learn an explicit process that focuses on adult actions (cause data) and their impact on student outcomes (effect data). As a result of this training, School and Instructional Data Teams will understand how to use data to develop, implement, monitor, and adjust school and instructional improvement plans designed to support effective teaching and learning.
4. *Improving School Climate to Support Student Achievement: Creating Climates of Respect (two days)*: Participants will focus on the principles, practices and strategies to establish

the kind of positive and respectful school climate required for students to realize optimal academic achievement. The training will provide participants with the skills necessary to collect appropriate data, create school climate improvement plans and to implement them in their respective schools.

In addition to the basic training modules, certification training is available for Improving School Climate to Support Student Achievement: Creating Climates of Respect. The purpose of this three day advanced training will be to certify staff to provide the basic training in their own districts. The certification training will be limited to persons who have completed the basic two-day training and who have been approved by their district to conduct in-district training.

The CALI professional development modules provide a comprehensive approach to ensure successful student learning and an opportunity for schools and districts to refine and improve much of what they are already doing. District and school participation is strongly encouraged.

For your information, the following modules that were previously offered through the CALI statewide program are still available thorough on-site professional development Request for Services (RFS) days or at SERC or your local RESC. Please log onto <http://sdecali.net> or your local RESC or SERC for more information:

- Classroom Data: Feedback, Follow up and Follow through
- Culturally Responsive Education
- Data Analysis for Educational Leaders
- Effective Teaching Strategies
- Effective Tier I Instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs)
- Formative Assessment Support
- Implementation for SRBI
- Leading Change and Getting Everyone on Board
- School Climate for Leaders